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Israel has 80 nuclear warheads, report says

Country reportedly stopped producing atomic weapons in 2004 but possesses enough fissile material for up to 190 warheads

By TIMES OF ISRAEL STAFF | September 15, 2013, 1:09 am |

Israel possesses a stockpile of 80 nuclear warheads, all of which were produced by 2004, when Israel froze all production, according to a report published over the weekend. The report, in the September/October issue of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, cited US Defense Intelligence Agency figures.

Israel began to produce chemical warheads in 1967 and gradually built up its arsenal, producing between two and three warheads each year until it amassed 80 warheads in 2004. The report did not say why Israel had ceased production, although it noted that the Jewish state is estimated to have produced enough fissile material for 115 to 190 warheads. 600?!

Israel's nuclear program has long been shrouded in secrecy, with the country maintaining a policy of ambiguity while refusing to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Previous estimates have put the number of warheads in Israel's possession at up to 400. According to foreign reports, Israel's military has the capacity to deliver a nuclear payload via a variety of methods, including ballistic missiles, aircraft, and submarine-launched cruise missiles.

The 80-warhead figure — fewer than once thought, and lower than the nuclear arsenal of countries that are officially in possession of atomic weapons — was cited in June in a 2013 yearbook put out by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), a leading think tank on global security issues.

Of those warheads, 50 are for medium-range ballistic missiles and 30 are for bombs carried by aircraft, the report said. In addition, "Israel may also have produced non-strategic nuclear weapons, including artillery shells and atomic demolition munitions," the Guardian reported.

In 1986, based on information supplied by ex-Dimona nuclear technician Mordechai Vanunu, later convicted of treason, the Sunday Times of London estimated that Israel had produced more than 100 nuclear warheads.

TAC² According to the new report, despite conducting several tests North Korea has yet to develop a serviceable atomic warhead. The report put the number of nuclear warheads in the hands of world powers, in descending order, at 4,650 possessed by the US, 4,480 by Russia, 300 by France, 250 by China, 225 by the UK, 120 by Pakistan, 110 by India, and 80 by Israel.

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The total number of serviceable atomic warheads in the world is 10,215, the report said, down from as high as 64,449 at the height of the Cold War in 1986.

YEAR	UNITED STATES*	RUSSIA*	UNITED KINGDOM	FRANCE	CHINA	ISRAEL	INDIA	PAKISTAN	NORTH KOREA	TOTAL*
1945	2									2
1946	9									9
1947	13									13
1948	50									50
1949	170	1								171
1950	299	5								304
1951	438	25								463
1952	841	50								891
1953	1,169	120	1							1,290
1954	1,703	150	5							1,858
1955	2,422	200	10							2,632
1956	3,592	428	60							4,168
1957	5,543	650	69							6,261
1958	7,345	863	60							8,268
1959	12,298	1,048	78							13,424
1960	18,638	1,627	105							20,370
1961	22,229	2,492	155							24,876
1962	25,540	3,348	211							29,097
1963	28,133	4,259	258							32,648
1964	29,493	5,242	271	4	1					34,981
1965	31,139	6,144	271	32	5					37,591
1966	31,175	7,091	281	38	20					38,603
1967	31,255	8,400	355	38	25	2				40,073
1968	29,581	9,490	317	38	35	4				39,443
1969	27,552	10,871	308	38	50	8				38,821
1970	26,008	11,739	375	38	75	8				38,238
1971	25,830	13,279	412	45	100	11				39,677
1972	26,516	14,600	423	70	130	13				41,752
1973	27,835	15,878	500	118	150	15				44,494
1974	28,537	17,298	500	145	170	17	a			46,655
1975	27,519	19,235	500	188	180	20				47,842
1976	25,914	22,185	500	212	180	22				48,993
1977	25,542	24,281	500	228	180	24				50,755
1978	24,418	26,169	500	235	190	28				51,538
1979	24,138	28,258	500	235	195	29				53,355
1980	24,104	30,665	500	250	205	31				55,755
1981	23,208	32,146	500	274	210	33				56,371
1982	22,886	33,486	385	274	218	35				57,282
1983	23,305	35,130	380	279	218	38				58,350
1984	23,459	36,825	350	280	220	40				61,174
1985	23,368	38,582	350	360	222	42				62,924
1986	23,317	40,159	350	355	224	44				64,449
1987	23,575	38,107	350	420	228	47				62,725
1988	23,205	36,538	350	410	228	49				60,780
1989	22,217	35,078	350	410	230	51				58,338
1990	21,392	32,980	350	505	232	53				55,512
1991	19,008	29,154	350	540	234	58				49,342
1992	13,708	26,734	250	540	234	58				41,524
1993	11,511	24,403	250	525	234	60				36,963
1994	10,979	21,339	250	510	234	62				33,374
1995	10,804	18,179	234	500	234	63				30,114
1996	11,011	15,942	203	450	234	64				27,904
1997	10,903	15,442	203	450	232	66				27,296
1998	10,732	14,368	240	450	232	68	3	2		26,065
1999	10,685	13,188	240	450	232	70	8	8		24,681
2000	10,577	12,188	280	470	232	72	13	14		23,846
2001	10,528	11,152	280	350	235	74	18	20		22,655
2002	10,457	10,114	280	350	235	78	23	26		21,561
2003	10,027	9,076	280	350	235	78	28	32		20,108
2004	8,570	8,038	280	350	235	80	33	38		17,624
2005	8,360	7,000	280	350	235	80	38	44		16,367
2006	7,853	6,643	225	350	235	80	43	50	b	15,479
2007	5,709	6,286	225	350	235	80	50	60		12,995
2008	5,273	5,929	225	300	235	80	60	70		12,172
2009	5,113	5,527	225	300	240	80	70	80	b	11,635
2010	4,950	5,215	225	300	240	80	80	90		11,180
2011	4,783	4,858	225	300	240	80	90	100		10,658
2012	4,680	4,500	225	300	240	80	100	110		10,235
2013	4,850*	4,480*	225	300	250	80	110	120	b	10,215*

* In addition to the stockpiled warheads listed in the US and Russian columns, the two countries each have several thousand retired but still intact warheads in storage awaiting dismantlement. If those warheads are included in the count, the total worldwide inventory is more than 17,000 warheads.

a India conducted a nuclear test in 1974.

b North Korea conducted nuclear tests in 2006, 2009, and 2013, but there is no public evidence that it has yet developed a stockpile of deliverable warheads.